Chinese Original Hymns

selected from

Hymns of Universal Praise

Words edited by
TIMOTHY TINGFANG LEW

Music edited by
BLISS WIANT

The Methodist Episcopal Church both North and South, the Episcopal Church in China, the Baptist Church, the Congregational Church and the Church of Christ in China (which includes the Presbyterian Church, the London Missionary Society and about 15 other denominations) have been working for seven years to produce a *union* hymnal which should be more indigenous than any hymnal produced in China to date. It should serve about three-fourths of all Protestant Christians in China; the participating communions have agreed not to publish any other hymnal for ten years.

There will be 500 hymns—450 have been newly translated and revised while the 50 remaining are newly composed CHINESE originals. Greatest care has been spent in selecting these 50 hymns out of 2000 which were presented and in choosing the 50 tunes out of 500 offered for the words. The harmonizations were all done by the musical editor for in this way was one style preserved.

Never in the history of hymnology have such divergent communions worked harmoniously together on such a fundamental issue as that of providing hymns for the people. This is a witness to the fact that Christianity in China has a unique unity of purpose and action never before witnessed in the history of denominational Christendom.

The English translations of the Chinese words were done by Dean T. C. Chao.

Over one thousand ($1000) dollars must be raised by them before they can return in August, 1936 with their four children to their unique work in Yenching University, Peiping. They must depend on their friends, both new and old, to assist. If you consider their work worth while and should be continued will you not help them to attain their goal by sending or giving your contributions? They will be greatly appreciated. Send or give as follows:

MR. AND MRS. BLISS WIANT

(Address until June 1936)
16 Adams Street,
Medford Hillside, Mass.

(Permanent address)
150 Fifth Avenue,
New York City

靈 修 歌

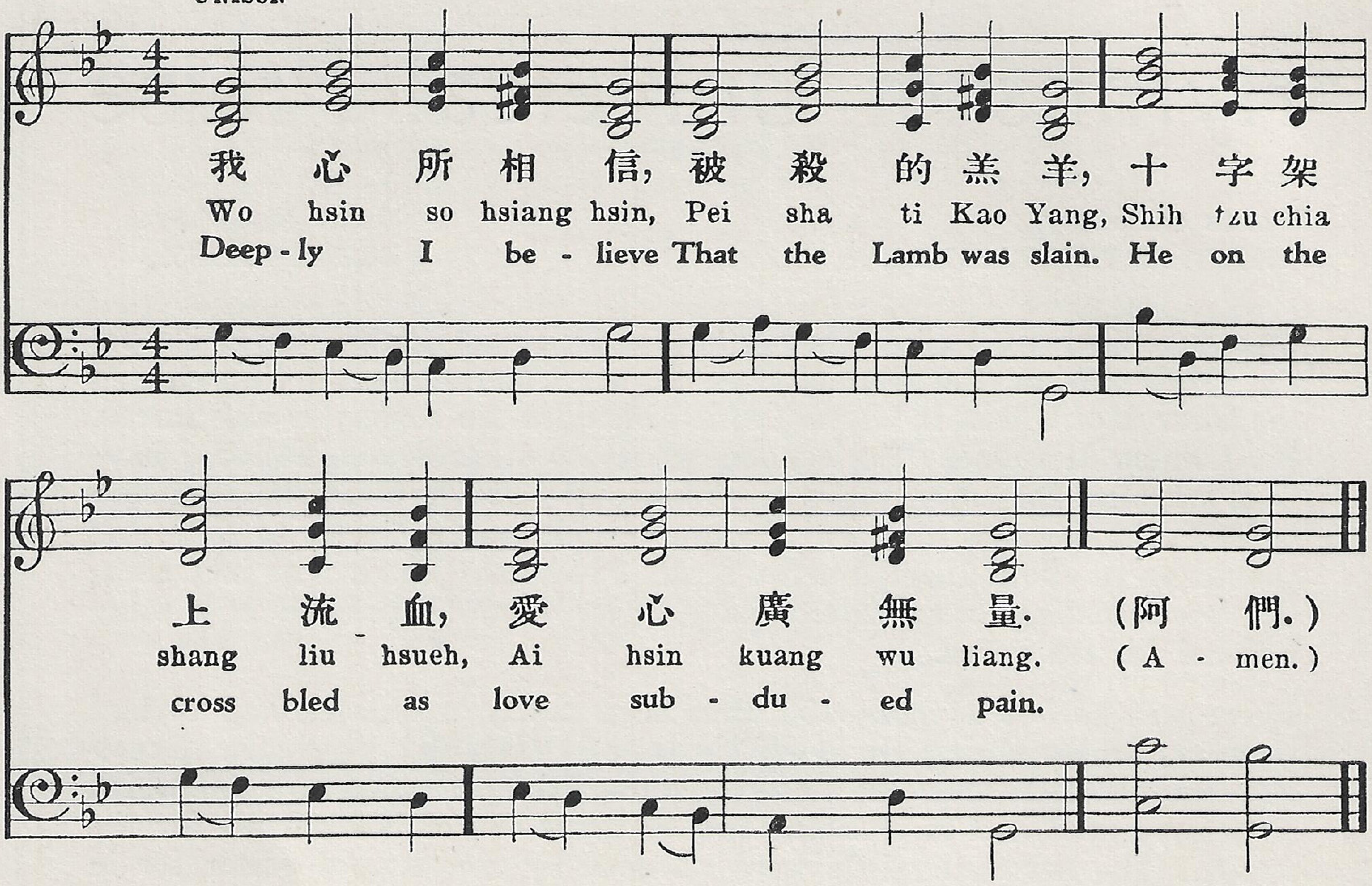
LING HSIU KE

MY FAITH IN THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN

SONG OF THE YANGTZE BOATMAN

T. C. CHAO, 1931 | CHINESE FOLKSONG

UNISON



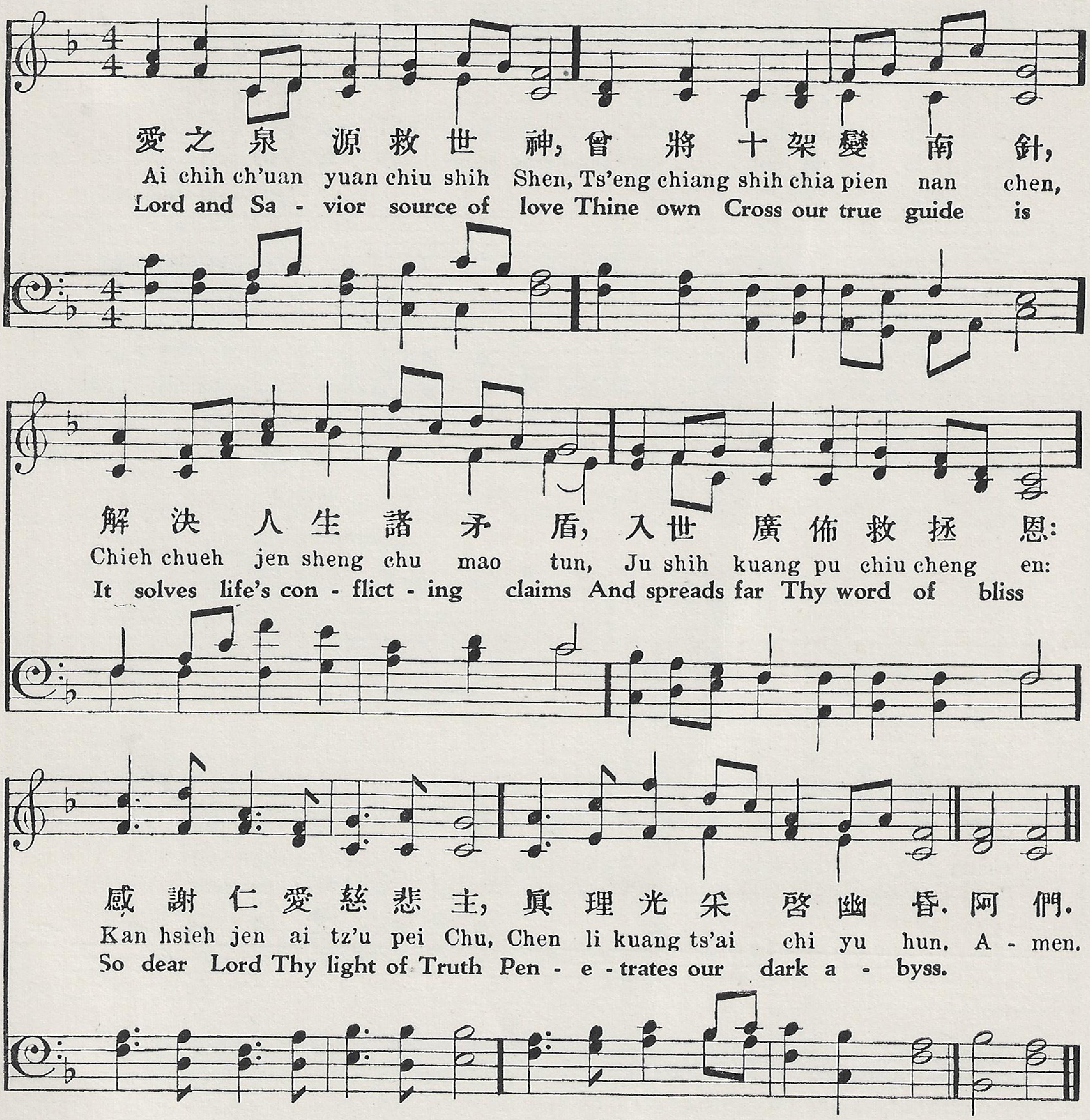
This tune might well be called the Chinese version of the Volga Boatsong so familiar to all in the west. As coolies pull heavily laden boats up the Yangtze River they sing in order that thru the rhythm of music they may unite their strength and thus be able to overcome the strong pull of a swiftly moving current in a mighty river. This sad music reflects the strain of muscle and the agony of hard labor and of an oppressed humanity in its upward struggle but coupled with it are new words which interpret this to mean that Jesus came to reveal a love which can overcome all difficulties.

Christianity has always used folk songs in its worship for it is by means of their use that the rank and file of worshippers have come to feel that Jesus was their possession.

This hymn, together with 53 others composed by Dr. T. C. Chao and set to Chinese tunes by Bliss Wiant, both members of the faculty of the School of Religion of Yenching University, Peiping, appeared in a new hymnal called 'Hymns for the People' in 1931. This book was unique in that no scholar of the caliber of Dean Chao had ever composed so many new hymns and such a large collection of Chinese tunes had never been published in one volume and utilized for church use.
The common people have received it gladly for it has sold by the thousands.

南針歌
NAN CHEN KE ("COMPASS" HYMN)
FOUNT OF LOVE, OUR SAVIOUR GOD
MAN CHIANG HUNG (ALL RED THE RIVER)

ERNEST, Y. L. YANG, 1934 — ANCIENT CHINESE VERSE TUNE



Verse tunes have been used by China for many centuries in chanting poems in a manner quite similar to the ancient Greeks. These tunes have represented certain metrical forms and thus have definite names. There are hundreds of these forms in China for this civilization has developed the art of poetry to an extent not equalled anywhere in the west.

This tune is called "All Red the River" and is the first instance of the use by the Christian Church of such music. It is entirely fitting that such a melody with such noble and uplifting associations should now find a permanent home in the church. Christianity has had a marvelous way of absorbing the best in its environment for its own use and in this way becoming an integral part of the culture in which it found itself.

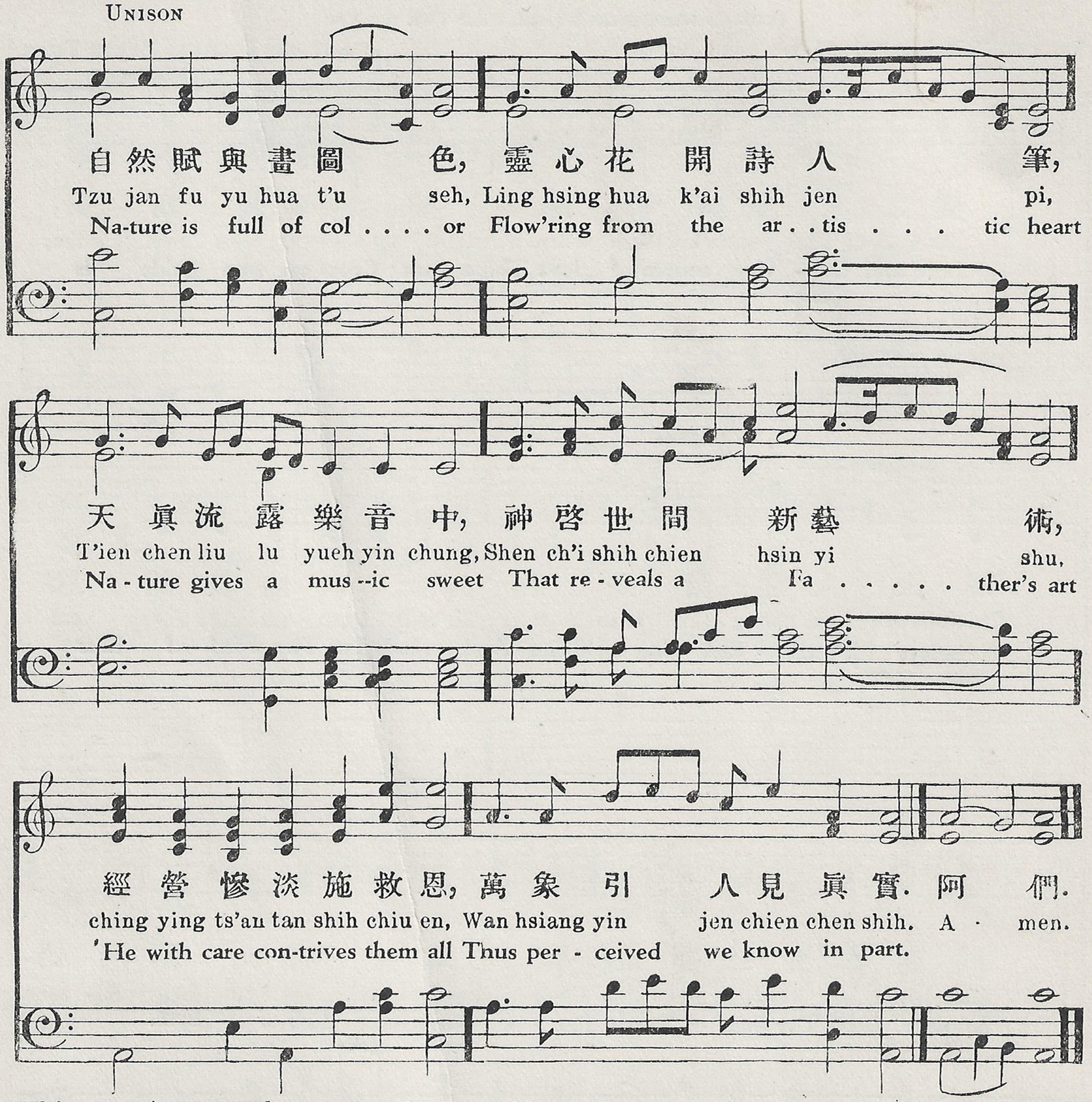
眞美歌

CHEN MEI KE

LORD, FOR THY REVEALING GIFTS

CHI LO YIN

ERNEST Y L. YANG, 1933 — ANCIENT CHINESE LUTE TUNE



This tune is many thousands of years old, in fact much older than the Christian era. China's great sage, Confucius probably knew and loved this tune and could play it on a very remarkable instrument known as the 'Seven Stringed Lute' a harp-like instrument which every true scholar for thousands of years was required to master before he could attain to this highest intellectual position in the educational system of ancient China.

The name of this melody is "IN A HAPPY MOOD" and has never been adapted for use in Christian hymnology before. No instrumental music of Chinese character has ever been used in China for religious purposes although there are innumerable examples of very beautiful and chaste music. Many melodies from instrumental sources have been used in the west however. Such a tune as this is thoroughly consonant with the best in China's rich cultural background and as such should make a contribution to a growing spirit of nationalism but infusing into this new spirit the message of the Christian Church.

With the introduction of such tunes into China's hymn store it is hoped that the west, in its quest for new material may here find suitable new melodies.